THE

SUBSTANCE

OF A

SPEECH,

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN

SPOKEN IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

NOVEMBER 22d, 1803,

BY

R. WATSON,

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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FOR

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It was my full Intention to have delivered the Substance of the following Speech in the House of Lords: but perceiving that, as I proceeded in the consideration of the Subject, I could not comprehend, in a short Speech, all that I wished to observe, and being unwilling to take up the time of the House with my Speculations, I have thought fit, in this way, to give my Sentiments to the Public. My "*Address*" to the People of Great Britain in 1798 was thought to do some Good; and this Publication may, I sincerely hope, be of some little

little Use: but however that may be, I could not rest satisfied with being considered as a careless, cold, or timid Spectator of the common Danger.

R. L.

Calgarth-Park,
Novr 18th, 1803.

My Lords,

IN Obedience to his Majesty's Commands, and in compliance with my own Sense of Public Duty, I this day appear in my place in the noblest Assembly upon earth, convened by the most gracious Monarch that ever sat upon a Throne, and required to deliberate upon the most important Subjects that ever occupied your Lordships' attention, or that of any of your predecessors in this House.

I, my Lords, could have been well contented to spend the little remainder of my life in retirement, and buried in obscurity; indifferent, alike, to the calls of professional Emolument, and professional Ambition: but I cannot be contented to remain indifferent to the Summons of my Sovereign, in a time of

 distress;

distress; deaf to the Calls of my Country, when its Existence is endangered.—Endangered we all know it to be: but where is the dastardly soul (none such, I am confident, is to be met with amongst your Lordships; none such, I hope, is to be met with amongst any of those in whose hearing I now speak)—where is the dastardly soul, who accompanies his Prospect of Danger, with a Feeling of Despair?

Without laying claim to any extraordinary degree of courage, any man, of an advanced age, who has well contemplated the short and slippery course of this world's concerns, may acquire such a firmness of mind, as will enable him to sustain with Stoical fortitude all the vicissitudes of fortune, which may await him; or, (to speak in language more appropriate, I am sensible, to your Lordships' principles, more consonant to your feelings, as well as to my own,) to acquiesce, with Christian resignation, in every Dispensation of God. What Cause can such a man ever have for Terror and Despair? On such a Man (I here see many such)—*Manca ruit semper fortuna.*—The worst that can happen to any individual

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amongst us is Death; and he who fears to die in the just Defence of his Country, does not deserve to live in it. I put the Matter at the very worst, and that worst is nothing: good men do not dread it, brave men do not shun it, wise men hourly think of it; it terrifies none but bad men and cowards. What ground then for our Despair? our Cause is good, our Conscience on this point is clear—we are not fighting to plunder other men's property, but to protect our own—we are not fighting to subvert the Liberty of other Nations, but to prevent the Yoke of Slavery from being fastened on our necks and on those of our posterity—we are not fighting in contempt of National Character, in despite of the Civil Order of the World, in derision of Religion, in mockery of Heaven—No! we are fighting, to preserve this happy Land from Atheism, from Despotism, or Anarchy, from that moral contamination of Principle and Practice, which outrages the very nature of humankind.

But why speak of the worst, when there is little Probability of the worst happening? To some, indeed, it must happen; some gallant

Men must fall in the noble conflict; but that the Nation will be subdued is not to me a probable event. The events of War, we acknowledge it with Humility, and we have abundant reason to acknowledge it with Gratitude and Piety, are in the hands of God. Our Duty is to trust the Issue of the Contest to Him, as if we were not concerned in bringing it about—but it is our Duty also to exert our own Energy, as if every thing depended on Ourselves. And are we not doing this, in a Manner and to an Extent unheard of in former times, in our own Country, and unprecedented in the most illustrious nations of Antiquity?

We read of a Law in *Sparta* which made it Death for a man to refuse hazarding his life in the Defence of his Country.—We have no such Law; but we have something a thousand times better than such a Law—we have a British Spirit.—That Spirit is now roused, it pervades the whole Country, it animates the Nobility, Gentry, Yeomanry, all Orders and Descriptions of Men, to do that Voluntarily, which even *Spartans* were compelled to do by the Fear of Punishment. Every City,

Town, and Village, from the Land's End to the Orkney Islands, pours forth its voluntary Legions, in Defence of their Country and of their King.

Glorious and unexampled on the Surface of the Earth is His Majesty's situation!—Other Princes there are who reign over more extensive Regions—other Princes there are who support their Thrones, in times of Peace, by more numerous Armies; and exercise over their Subjects a more unlimited Sway.—But where is the Prince, in Europe, or in the World, who, in the day of Danger, sees himself protected as His Majesty is, by the united Efforts of all His People—by the Persons of those who are able to wield a Weapon;—by the Prayers of the Aged and of the Sex;—by the Purses of the Rich;—and by the Hearts of All?—Surely all this is well—it does Honour to the King, it does equal Honour to the People. They know for whom and for what they expose their Lives—they know that they are not miserable *Conscripts*, driven in chains to be sacrificed on the altar of an ambitious Leader, whom they detest; but Loyal Subjects, voluntarily encountering Danger for a

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legal and beloved Monarch; and not for Him only, but for Themselves; for the Preservation of that limited Monarchy, which is the primary Source of all the Blessings they enjoy, as Members of Civil Society.

Is any one ignorant of these Blessings? does any one think that he has nothing to fight for, that his Condition is so mean and uncomfortable that, let what will happen, it cannot become worse under any Constitution which may take place? Mistaken Man! go and see if thou canst find in France—a Trial by Jury—an *Habeas Corpus* Act—an incorrupt Administration of Justice—an Equality of Law—a Security of Life and Property—a parochial Maintenance for thy Orphans and thy Widow—and for thyself, when Age or Accident shall have unnerved the Arm of Industry? Blessings these! which the meanest Englishman so liberally enjoys, that he is apt to overlook them; which the greatest Frenchmen so eagerly desire, that they will ere long with Swords in their hands demand them. The Soldiery of France, of Holland, Switzerland, Italy, glutted at length with Slaughter, satiated at length with Plunder, will, ere long,

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begin to be ashamed, officers and men, of the part they have acted in this Revolutionary Tragedy of the World; they will at length make an Atonement for the Mischief they have done, and snap, at once, the despotic Chains, which in a fit of Faction, Passion, and Insanity, they have contributed to impose on their respective Countries.

But be this as it may,—for there is little certainty in any political prediction, and least of all in mine,—permit me to congratulate your Lordships and the Nation on that Military Ardour which is every where excited. It is every where excited to such a Pitch, that were our Generals commissioned to say to their Troops, as the Jewish Officers were obliged, by the Law of Moses, to say to their Soldiers before they engaged in Battle—"What man is there that is fearful and faint-"hearted, let him go and retire unto his "house"—Not one in an hundred, I think, would retire from their Ranks.

It has been said of *Carthage*—that all her Citizens were Merchants, mindful of nothing but of the Acquisition of Wealth:—and it has been said of *Rome*—that all her Citizens were

Soldiers,

Soldiers, mindful of nothing but of the Acquisition of Military Glory.—The Issue of our present Struggle will, I trust, teach all future Historians to say of Britain, that She united Characters hitherto esteemed discordant, and incompatible, and combined for her Defence the Strength of Carthage and of Rome—that her Soldiers were Merchants and her Merchants were Soldiers. Had Carthage been, after the second Punic War, what Great Britain now is, the Exclamation of *Cato* (which our *modern Catos*, forsooth, have so vociferously adopted) the—*delenda est Carthago*—would have been considered by the Roman Senate as an impudent Gasconade, unworthy of its Attention.

Let our Enemies mark the difference between Great Britain and Carthage, to say nothing of that between Rome and France. We are not defended, as Carthage was, by Mercenaries, seldom faithful, always uninterested in the Event of War, and sparing of their Blood.—We are not supported, as She was, by tributary states, impatient of our Yoke, and watching for an Opportunity to throw it off—We are not assisted, as She was,

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by Allies, envious of our Prosperity, and secretly hoping to benefit themselves by our Downfall—better none than such Allies!—No! we have no mercenary forces, no tributary states, no alliances; but we have more than an equivalent for them all,—A free Constitution—the Work of Ages! the Wonder of the World! the Wish of surrounding states! the *Palladium* which our ancestors have committed to our Custody; which, whilst we possess it, will render us invincible, and which, whilst we have Life, we have to a man determined to defend.

Europe, already subdued by her Fears, or dishonoured by her Hopes, or maddened by Resentment for, perhaps, some real, for many fancied, Insults on the Ocean—on any supposition, Europe now stands aloof, leaves us to Ourselves, deserted at our utmost need—So was *Corsica* left; so was *Poland* left; and so, if we are conquered, will every European state be left, in its turn, till the gigantic Military Despotism of One nation shall overspread the Globe.

This Idea is so forcibly impressed on my

 mind,

mind, that, were I this day standing in the midst of all the Cabinets of Europe, I would not scruple to exclaim—Infatuated are your Councils! You are all jealous of each other, all envious of us, all occupied in paltry considerations of your own particular Interests, unmindful of the General Safety, blind to the subtle progress of a mighty power, equal already to the strongest of you, daily increasing in strength, and, for a Century past, determined to annihilate you all.—

What a Frenchman said of the Romans is so peculiarly characteristic of his Countrymen at this time, that I cannot forbear applying it. "Enemies to the Liberty of all nations; "having the utmost contempt for Kings and "Monarchy,—they grasped with insatiable "ambition the conquest of the world, they "seized indiscriminately all Provinces and "Kingdoms, and extended their Empire over "all nations."

But enough of these tragical forebodings with respect to the mischief impending over other nations:—I beg your Lordships' patience whilst I shortly mention some of the Means

which,

which, in addition to our present Exertions, may help to avert the Catastrophe from ourselves.

In the first place then, my Lords, I am of Opinion, that the first class of the people, adopting the Division prescribed by a late Act of Parliament, should be called out and taught the use of Arms, not merely as a temporary Expedient to answer the present Exigency, but annually continued as a permanent measure of the Executive Government. Unwise and defective is that Policy, which is occupied in devising Remedies for present Evils, without extending its views to prevent the Recurrence of Danger. I readily join in the general Praise so justly given to the Volunteers; but this Commercial Nation ought so far to become a Military Nation, as always to have within itself a Sufficiency of Men ready disciplined for its Defence. This may be completely effected for the present occasion in a short time: and when the Pressure of the present Occasion is removed, it may be established as a permanent Measure in the course of six years, without giving any

sensible Interruption to our Agriculture, our Manufactures, or our Commerce.

The Population of the Country would annually supply, at least, fifty thousand youths, who in the preceding twelve months had attained the seventeenth year of their age; in six years we should have three hundred thousand young men sufficiently instructed in the use of Arms. In the seventh year, fifty thousand of them might be dismissed, as *emeriti*, from further Attendance on Military Duty, except when the Country was invaded. Thus by a slight service of a few days annually for six years, the Whole Nation (for no Substitutes should in this arrangement be allowed) would at length become a Nation, not of Warriors, but of peaceful Citizens, of all occupations and denominations, ready to become Warriors, whenever the Safety of their Country should require the Exertion of their Skill and Courage. Neither France alone, nor France with all Europe in her Vassalage, would venture to set a foot on this Island thus prepared to receive them:—Great Britain, single handed, would defy the World.

I own I prefer this Militia Rotation, if I may so call it, which I have submitted to your Lordships' Consideration, not only to the Volunteering System, but to every other mode of *extraordinary* Defence. It would not supersede the Standing Army, it would be subsidiary to it, and might greatly assist in recruiting the Ranks of the Regular Forces, and perhaps in diminishing their number. Some Men are apt to speak of every species of Militia Force with contempt; this has been always the case. *Lord Clarendon* in one part of his History speaks in a most disparaging Style of the London Trained-bands: but he is forced to do them Justice in another, where he informs us, that they courageously resisted with their Pikes the Cavalry of Prince *Rupert*, though led on by himself, and thereby saved the Army at the battle of *Newbury*. It was by a force of this kind that the Romans first conquered Italy, and then the World. And, in our time, a force of this kind captured a most gallant Army at *Saratoga*, and thereby acquired Independence for *America*.

I forbear, my Lords, entering into any detail

detail on this subject; the very mention of which may appear to some to be a going beyond my Province. But the—*ne sutor ultra crepidam*—the, *tractent fabrilia fabri*—the; let Bishops mind their Bibles—these, and sarcasms such as these, from whatever mouth they may proceed, affect not me; nor ought they to affect any honest Man, who is desirous to serve his Country by his Advice.—The Advice may be worth nothing, but your Lordships' Candour will, I am persuaded, suffer the rectitude of the Speaker's Intention to sanctify the imbecility of his Judgment.

I rely upon that Candour, and proceed to mention a second Mean of extricating the Country from its present Danger, and of preserving it from all future Apprehension of Danger. The Mean I recommend is—The payment of the National Debt, at least of that part which has been added to it by the seven Years War, by the American War, by the last War, and by this.

This would be an Act of Magnanimity worthy of ancient Rome—it would exceed that which Rome itself displayed after the battle of *Cannæ*—She expected Hannibal at her

her Gates, but she did not despair; she redoubled her means of Defence.—We expect France on our Shores to attack us with her Forces, or to bankrupt us by Expense:—what does Britain? she prepares to resist the Forces, and she determines to pay her Debt. France will be thunderstruck at her own Temerity, in attempting to subdue a Nation possessed of such Resources.—Europe will be astonished at this noble Sacrifice of Private Wealth to Public Want—America will rejoice in the Vigour of her aged Parent—and no Nation in the World will dare, for a century to come, to disturb the Peace of a People which would have a fresh Credit for four or five hundred Millions on the Commencement of Hostilities. I own the Idea of paying the National Debt swells my heart with patriotic pride—I see this truly Great Nation, instead of being depressed to the earth, instead of succumbing under the weight of its burdens, Erecting itself with firmness and throwing them off; not unjustly transferring them to the backs of the Stock-holders alone, making them the only Sufferers, but removing them from all. I have sometimes

times compared, in my own mind, this Payment of the Debt, to the Removal of one of those enormous heaps of small stones which are not unfrequently met with in the mountains of the North ; it would break the hearts of a few Villagers to be ordered to remove them, but if every individual in the Country was ordered to carry away as large a one as he could easily lift, the work would soon be finished ; no person could be injured by his Share of the Labour, and the Heap would disappear for ever.

I am not ignorant, My Lords, that he who talks of paying the National Debt is considered as a chimerical Projector of Impossibilities, a mere State Empiric, fitter for a seat in the Senate of *Utopia* than of Britain. My opinion is quite different; and whilst it is my opinion, I am not afraid to declare it, nor ashamed of its Singularity! The National Debt is an huge Imposthume growing on the Body Politic ; you may yet lessen it with safety, but if you suffer it to go on increasing till it bursts, its rupture will exhaust the strength, if it does not terminate the Existence of the Patient.

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This measure appears to me not only possible, but easily practicable; and not only practicable, but highly useful to the State; and not only highly useful to the State, but profitable to every Individual in it paying Taxes. It would be highly useful to the State, not only from the effect it would have on the Cabinets of Europe; but from two effects especially, which it would have upon ourselves.—It would check the Luxury of all Ranks; for though Luxury may, in a Commercial State, be useful to a certain extent, yet it always ends in Ruin when carried too far; it debases men's minds by teaching them to value things not in themselves estimable; and it effeminates their bodies by habituating them to destructive indulgences.—It would have another and a most important effect—it would preserve to the Country the middle Class of its People, whom enormous Taxation is daily reducing to the lowest, or compelling to Emigration,—for miserable at home, and impotent abroad, will this Nation become, when it shall be composed of none but the very rich and the very poor.

The payment of the National Debt would,

I have said, be profitable to every Individual paying Taxes—This, at the first view, appears to be a Paradoxical assertion; but it is as certain a Truth, as that every man is richer who sells part of his property to pay his debts, than he would be if he made a fresh mortgage upon it every year, by which, in addition to the Interest of his Debt, he would have an attorney's bill to discharge. A considerable Portion of the Tax which any man now pays to Government never reaches the Exchequer of the Kingdom. I don't mean, by this observation, to cast any imputation of dishonour upon men engaged in the Management of Taxes, and of the Public Revenue; they are necessary parts of the great Machine of Government, and are very properly paid for their services; my wish is, that by paying the Debt and taking off the Taxes imposed for the Payment of the Interest of it, the services of such men might be less wanted.

I proposed, my Lords, this subject to public consideration five years ago, in my Address to the People of Great Britain, (of which publication, by the bye, above thirty thousand Copies were dispersed in Great Britain

and

and Ireland, with what effect to the Public it becomes not me to say) and I will not trouble your Lordships with a repetition of what I stated in that Address. One thing only I think it very important to recommend, if ever the measure itself, or an efficacious approximation to the measure, should be adopted—that it be extended to every Class and to every Individual in the Kingdom possessing Property, in a just Proportion to what he possesses. The true Principle of Taxation seems to me to be this—That every man should pay for the Protection of his Property by the State, in exact Proportion to the Value of the Property protected; just as Merchants, who risk their goods on board a Vessel, pay an Insurance in Proportion to the Value of the Goods insured.—This is so plain and equitable a Principle, that every man is capable of understanding it, and no one is able, on reasonable grounds, to object to it. I at least never yet met with a person worth an hundred pounds, who, when the question was put to him (and I have put it to many), did not acknowledge it to be perfectly right, that

he should pay one or two pounds out of his hundred towards the Liquidation of the National Debt, provided that every man worth an hundred thousand pounds paid one or two thousand pounds for the same purpose. Common people are as acute as their superiors in distinguishing between Justice and Oppression; and I think so well of human nature in general as to believe, that there is in all classes such a respect for Justice, that no Statesman need fear to propose to his Country any measure founded on the basis of Justice, and evidently become necessary for the Preservation of the State.

The Principle here mentioned, is as applicable to our present mode of raising the Supplies, as it is to the Payment of the National Debt, and were it adopted, the Supplies would be far more abundant.—I have never yet heard a substantial reason given, why the Taxation should stop at a property of sixty, or even of ten pounds a year. A man of ten pounds a year is as able to pay (I mean with as little privation of *his* comforts) ten shillings annually, as a man of five hundred a year is to

pay

pay five hundred shillings. If we trace the matter to the bottom, and speak of Luxuries, as distinguished from Necessaries, we shall find every thing comparatively speaking to be a Luxury. Bread is a Luxury to those who feed on the bark of Trees; Beer is a Luxury to him whose beverage has been Water; Wine is a Luxury to him whose ordinary beverage is Beer; and a Savage in America with a blanket on his shoulders, is a man of Luxury, compared with his neighbour who has none. Our inimitable Bard has expressed this Idea in better language than I can use, where he introduces Lear arguing with his daughter about what was *needful* for his State.

> O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
> Are in the poorest thing superfluous;
> Allow not Nature more than Nature needs,
> Man's life is cheap as beasts.—

What portion of each man's property may be requisite for the discharge of the National Debt, by Instalments in the course of four or five years, cannot at present, I think, be ascertained with any degree of certainty. I

have seen calculations of the Property of the Kingdom in Land, Houses, Money, Cattle, Merchandise, &c.; but the *data* on which these calculations were founded, were too arbitrarily assumed to render the conclusion unexceptionable. But whether an hundredth, or a fiftieth, or a twenty-fifth part of the whole should be required, I am clearly of opinion that no man of good sense would murmur at the payment of it, when he considered that such payment would not only save the State, but be a pecuniary Saving to himself. A pecuniary Saving to a man's self, is a circumstance likely to arrest the attention of every individual; though, in truth, the Saving of the Country is an object of more importance, as it comprises every other. For if the Country is subdued, its Freedom will be lost; and with its Freedom, will perish its Ingenuity, its Industry, its commercial Enterprise, and its martial Spirit—all the copious sources of Domestic Happiness, and of National Consequence will be choked up for ever.

I have yet, My Lords, to beg your indulgence, whilst I briefly mention two other subjects—they are subjects of great importance

ance and of difficult discussion; but as I mean to hint them for Consideration, rather than to press them on the Government for Decision, and have no wish to anticipate public wisdom on either of them, I must take the liberty to mention them, especially as they have both of them been long and seriously considered by me.——The two subjects I mean to touch upon are, the State of the Catholics in Ireland, and the State of the Dissenters in England.

With respect to Ireland, I declared my opinion of its situation when the Union was debated in this House. I said then, and I have seen no reason since to change my opinion, that the Union would be more advantageous to Ireland than it would be to Great Britain, and that it would be eminently useful to them both. And notwithstanding the treasonable combinations which exist in Ireland, I believe this to be the opinion of a great majority of the Irish people; and that France will be exceedingly disappointed in her expectations of a general rising of the Catholics in her favour, should She land any forces in that Country.

One of the most able and active Instigators of Rebellion amongst them, declared, at a time when men are most disposed to disguise nothing, that he deprecated all connexion with France, and I give full credit to his declaration. Whatever might have been the designs of him and others, when they first united for the purpose of Rebellion, they could not be ignorant of, or insensible to what had happened to Holland, Switzerland, Italy,—to every Country which had received the Fraternal Embrace of France—they could not but know, that it chilled, like the embrace of Death, those whom it touched; that it stiffened with horror and suspicion all the mild charities, and paralysed all the noble energies of social life. What was it then that moved these unhappy men to undertake so wicked and so dangerous an enterprise? Was it a mistaken sense of honour (to speak of it in the gentlest terms)? Did they wish to render themselves illustrious, by rendering their country independent, and unconnected with us or any other nation? Wild Ambition! Idle Expectation! Improvident Policy! which aimed at an Object not attainable, in the present

present state of Europe, and disadvantageous to Ireland, if attained. Did they unite to redress the grievances under which they imagined their Country laboured? They ought to have remembered, that Ireland has been treated with more indulgence (I do not say with more than She deserved) but with more indulgence during the present Reign, than during any other equal period of time since her connexion with Great Britain; and they ought particularly to have considered that the Union was intended (and its intention will, I do not doubt, be finally accomplished) to remove every shadow of grievance which remained.

One circumstance in the situation of Ireland has always appeared to me an hardship, and that hardship still remains undiminished. I have always thought it an hardship, that a great Majority of the Irish People should be obliged, at their own expence, to provide religious Teachers for themselves and their families. I have the copy of a letter, in my possession, to the Duke of Rutland when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in which I pressed upon his consideration, the propriety of

making a provision for the Catholic Bishops and Clergy in that Country; and I have been assured by men, well acquainted with the temper of the Irish, that had such a measure been then judiciously adopted, a Rebellion would have been avoided, and Ireland would long ago have been tranquillized. Whether the time for trying such a mean of tranquillization be now so passed that it cannot be recalled, I know not; but whether it be so passed or not, the measure itself, being founded in Justice, is not unworthy the Consideration of Government. I love, my Lords, to have Politics, on all occasions, founded on substantial Justice, and never on apparent temporary Expedience, in violation of Justice; and it does appear to me to be just,—That the religious Teachers of a large Majority of a State should be maintained at the Public Expence.

If you would make men good subjects, deal gently with their Errors; give them time to get rid of their Prejudices; and especially take care to leave them no just Ground for Complaint. Men may for a time be inflamed by Passion, or may mistake

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their Pertinacity for a Virtue, or may be misled by bad Associates; but leave them no just Ground of Complaint, and their aberrations from rectitude of public conduct will never be lasting; Truth and Justice, though occasionally obstructed in their progress, never fail at length to produce their proper effect.

Justice, I think, may be done to the Catholics, without Injustice being done to the Protestants.—The protestant Clergy may continue to possess the Tithes of the Country; and the catholic Clergy may be provided for from the public Exchequer of the Empire. I see no danger which would arise to the established Church from some such arrangement as this; and it would, probably, be attended with the greatest advantage to the State. We think the Catholics to be in an Error; they think the same of us; both ought to reflect that, every Error is not a criminal Error, and that their Error is the greatest, who most err against Christian Charity.

If any one should contend that this is not the time for Government to make Conces-

sions to Ireland,—I wish him to consider whether there is any time in which it is improper for either Individuals or Nations to do Justice, any season improper for extinguishing animosity, any occasion more suitable than the present, for putting an end to heart-burnings and internal discontent. I should be as averse as any man from making Concessions to an Enemy invading the Country; but I would do much to gain a cordial Friend to assist me in driving him back;—and such a Friend, I am confident, Ireland will become.

I come to the last point—the Case of the Dissenters.—I am well aware that on this point I differ in opinion from men whom I esteem; but without arrogating to myself, without allowing to others, any infallibility of Judgment, I am anxious, in this Crisis of our Fate, to speak my whole mind. What I presume to recommend is—A Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—as a Mean of combining together, in the cords of mutual amity and confidence, the whole Strength and Spirit of the Country. It has been said that the Dissenters constitute above a fifth part of

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the population of the Kingdom; I do not think them to be so numerous; but I am convinced that they are too loyal to be treated with Distrust at any time, and too numerous to be soured by neglect at this time. I am far from insinuating that the Dissenters want to be bribed to their Duty by the repeal of the Test Act; no, my Lords, Churchmen and Dissenters of every denomination, are equally Zealous in the Common Cause—they seem to me to emulate the patriotism of the Patricians and Plebeians at Rome; who, for five hundred years, waged an eternal War of Words about their respective Rights, Claims, Oppressions, Privileges,—but when their Country was in Danger, when an Enemy invaded their Territory, they laid aside their Disputes; their only Contention then was, which of them could show the greatest Courage in repulsing the Enemy of them both.

I have never had any design, any wish, my Lords, to gain the good-will of the Dissenters, by becoming a Champion in their Cause—much less have I any inclination to provoke the Ill-will of Churchmen, and the Disesteem of my Brethren, by a forward display,

display, or a froward retention, of an Opinion opposite to their's. I may be wrong in thinking that the repeal of the Test Act would in no degree endanger the Safety of either the Church or State; but whilst I do think so, I should act a timid, interested, dishonourable, part, if I concealed my Sentiments.

I will mention to your Lordships an anecdote respecting this matter; for the truth of which I pledge my Honour, and, in doing that I hope I may be permitted to expect full credit from the House. When the Dissenters, a second time, petitioned Parliament for the Repeal of the Test Act, I called, accidentally, upon Lord *Camden*, then President of the Council; and, in the course of conversation, asked him this plain question, suggested by the alarm which had been taken by some Churchmen—" Does your Lordship see any " danger to the Church of England from the " repeal of the Test Act?"—He answered, with an eagerness peculiar to himself when his mind was determined—" None whatever." —If then I err in this matter, I err with the late Lord Camden; and though I had not

rather

rather err with him, than be right with others, yet I neither wish for, nor know where to find, a better Supporter of my Sentiment.

The general good sense of the Age has freed itself from many Opinions on Religion and Government, which disturbed the minds of our Fathers. The Church does not now lay claim to Tithes as due by any other Law than the Law of the Land—She does not persecute Dissenters, whom she cannot persuade—She denounces no Anathema against Schismaticks—nor arrogates to herself alone the Title of—The true Church.—Passive Obedience to bad Kings, the Divine Right of all Kings, and indefeasible Succession, are tenets now maintained by few. These, and similar doctrines concerning Church and State, which occasioned so much trouble to Government, and mischief to the People, in several preceding Reigns, have in the Reign of GEORGE III. expired with what gave support to most of them—*Jacobitism*—They have been buried, I trust, for ever, in the same grave with the *Pretender*.

If a degree of bitterness, my Lords, against Dissenters be still subsisting in the minds of some

some Laymen—if the Church have still amongst its members, a few whose zeal against Non-conformists of every denomination is violent;—if the vulgar be still capable of being incited, by the Cry of the Church's Danger, to commit enormities shocking to Humanity, and disgraceful to Civil Policy; yet the Legislature of this Kingdom has, in several Instances, shown a more liberal policy towards those who cannot in conscience conform to the established Church. This liberality will daily increase, if those who are the objects of it in any part of the Empire continue to deserve it. The Dissenters want not my advice; they will permit me however to observe, that a firm attachment to the Civil Constitution as settled at the Revolution, Moderation towards the Church, Loyalty towards the King, and a peaceable Deportment towards all, are irresistible weapons by which they will at length subdue all opposition to their claims. This opposition springs not, I am certain, from any feelings of Persecution or Intolerance in our Governors; but it springs in some well-meaning men, from the fears and jealousies, to which timid tem-

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pers are peculiarly subject, when any Innovation is proposed; in others it arises from an apprehension, that there may be a renewal of the troubles, and ruin of the Church and State, which took place in the reign of Charles I.; notwithstanding the great diversity between the circumstances of the Country then and now, in many respects, and in particular in the Throne being filled by the House of Brunswick, and not by that of Stuart. We none of us have now any thing to fear from the arbitrary Exactions of a Monarch, or from the Ecclesiastical Tyranny of an Archbishop. The prudent and dispassionate among the Dissenters in England, and among the Catholics both in England and Ireland, who consider how difficult it is for Non-conformists, as well as for Churchmen, and in truth how difficult it is for all men, to get the better of Prejudices implanted by education, and rooted by reflexion, will rather wonder that so much has been done for them, than indulge a petulant discontent, as if they had suffered an indignity in being denied any thing.

I know, my Lords, that I have been

accused of being a Republican, of being a Presbyterian, of being I know not what sort of dangerous thing, that was to be watched, intimidated, undermined, depressed. I have scorned (too haughtily, perhaps, for my Interest) but I have through life scorned to repel open Calumny, to counteract secret Misrepresentation, by Words; leaving it to the World and to Posterity (if Posterity shall ever inquire after me) to form a Judgment of my Principles and Character from my Actions. I have no partiality for Presbyterianism, I prefer Episcopacy to it. I have no partiality for Republicanism, thinking it worse than Despotism; and Despotism, your Lordships will think with me, is worse than Death. I have no partiality for either Catholics, or protesting Catholics, or dissenting Protestants, as such; but I have a partiality for Truth, and Moderation, and Justice, and the Safety of the Country: and its Safety will at all times be best secured by the hearty Union and Concurrence of all its Members in its defence. The Age for excessive Jealousies, for exclusive Privileges, for domineering Pretensions, for narrow Principles of Legislation and Government,

ment, is over; and happy, my Lords, will that People be, whose Rulers seasonably advert to the Change which the "greatest of all Innovators—Time" insensibly operates in the Circumstances of the World.

If, my Lords, I should differ in Opinion from any, or from all, of your Lordships, on any, or on all, of the four points on which I have spoken, I certainly shall lament such difference as a misfortune; but at the same time I must confess, that even a fore-knowledge of that difference would not have deterred me from speaking:—*liberavi animam meam*—and it is impossible that there ever can occur to any of us an occasion of greater necessity, to form our Opinions with due Consideration, and to deliver them with Sincerity. I have spoken with Confidence, but not, I hope, with Arrogance—with Confidence, because my mind was made up; without Arrogance, because I am extremely sensible, that the fallibility of Judgment which belongs, in some degree, to most men, belongs, in a great degree, to myself. I am ashamed, my Lords, to speak of the personal Service of a Man in his 67th year; he could render none to his Country.

Yet if the last Extremity should arrive, we must all of us do what we can. All professional Immunities must give way to Public Necessity; all Exemptions from Military Duty must cease.—They ceased in Corsica, when, at the Call of their Country, five hundred Priests took up arms to resist Gallic Oppression—They ceased in ancient Rome, whenever the Romans were threatened, as we are now, with a Gallic Invasion; and they must cease with Us, before we cease to be an Independent People.

Allow me, my Lords, before I sit down, to say a word or two on what appears to me to be the true Cause of our commencing this War. I am the more disposed to do this from observing, that this Cause has been much kept out of sight, as if we were ashamed to produce it; whereas it appears to me so reasonable and just a Cause, that I wish all the World to know it.

My *Alma Mater*, My Lords, and I trust the *revered Alma Mater* of many of your Lordships, has, for near a Century past, been in the habit of strengthening the intellectual faculties of her Sons by the severity of Mathe-

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matical Discipline—She has been blamed for this; but, I presume to say, not wisely blamed: for at the same time that She engages them in the recondite researches of Mathematical Science, She permits and exhorts them to try their strength, in the investigation of the most subtle questions of Morality and Jurisprudence. When I was a *Soph* at Cambridge forty-five years ago, I maintained in the Philosophical Schools a Question, on the Truth of which depends the Justice of this War, and the Fate of Europe. The Question was this —*Jure Gentium arma rectè sumuntur, ad imminuendam crescentem potentiam, quæ nimiùm aucta nocere posset.*—The great *Grotius* positively denies this doctrine; and I now consider my having undertaken to maintain it, in opposition to his authority, to have been a mere piece of youthful temerity; or, to speak most favourably of it, of pardonable vanity. But I have since met with an authority greater than that of *Grotius*; which (though it does not excuse my temerity, for I did not then know of it) entirely satisfies me, that the doctrine I then maintained was true. The authority I allude to is not less than that of

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the " greatest of mankind."—It is so full to the purpose of justifying the War we have commenced, and such a Warning to Europe, that I will beg leave to quote it, from his—Essay of Empire—" Princes should be per-
" petually upon the Watch, that none of their
" Neighbours do overgrow so (whether by
" increase of Territory, or by embracing of
" Trade, or by nearer approaches, and the
" like) as to become more able to annoy them
" than they were before. And this is gene-
" rally the work of standing counsels to
" foresee and hinder. Certainly during that
" Triumvirate of Kings (Henry the Eighth
" of England, Francis the First of France,
" and Charles the Fifth of Spain) there was
" such a vigilance among them, that none of
" the three could win a span of Ground but
" the other two would straightway balance it,
" either by consideration, or, if need were, by
" War.——Neither is the Opinion of some
" of the School-men to be received, That a
" War cannot justly be undertaken, but upon
" a precedent injury or provocation. For
" there is no question, but a just fear of an
" imminent danger, though there be no blow

" given,

" given, is a competent and lawful Cause of " a War."

The Jealousy respecting the increase of the power of France, which, as Lord Bacon has observed, actuated the Councils of Henry VIII. was a prominent feature in the Politics of his daughter *Elizabeth*. There is a remarkable passage in proof of this in *Sully*'s Memoirs. --When that minister, by order of his Master Henry IV. had an interview with Queen Elizabeth at Dover, she plainly said to him, "If the King of France, my brother, should be desirous of making himself the Proprietary, or even only the feudal Seignior of the United Provinces, I do not conceal from you that the attempt will excite my utmost Jealousy." What would this Princess have said had she witnessed that colossal aggrandizement of France, which it is our misfortune to behold? She would have called upon all the Powers of Europe to unite in reducing it; and, had She found the Powers of Europe as deaf to her exhortations as they are to ours, She would have done what a Monarch, as beloved as herself, (and none was ever more beloved,) is now doing— She would have called out her Own People,

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and relied, under God, on their Loyalty and Bravery for Success.

I acknowledge, My Lords, that the Insult offered to our Sovereign in the person of his Ambassador; that the repeated Menaces of Invasion; that the Tergiversation respecting Malta; that these and other similar Injuries might, if on representation persevered in, be esteemed just Causes of War; yet I entirely rely on the Truth of the Thesis I have mentioned, as a sufficient Ground of just and honourable Aggression.

Contumelious Language is a disgrace only to him who uses it, and is best answered by Silence and Contempt; slight Injuries are fitter to be settled by diplomatic Negotiation, than avenged by the Force of Arms; but an increasing Power is to be reduced before it becomes too strong; for the History of all Ages and Countries informs us, that when an overgrown nation has the Means, it seldom wants the Will to oppress its Neighbours. France makes no Secret of her Will; we are justified in preventing her from acquiring the Means.

Some of your Lordships are old enough to remember the time, when, in the latter part of the Reign of George II. immense preparations were made by France at *Toulon*, at *Brest*, and in every other Port of that Kingdom, for the Invasion of this. The alarm of the Nation was extreme; Government was panic-struck; the Militia was called out, and German Auxiliaries were brought into the Country to defend it. I shall never forget the phrenzy of joy which seized the whole Nation, when news was brought—that *Boscawen* had destroyed the *Toulon* fleet,—And when news was brought, three months afterwards,—that *Hawke* had destroyed the *Brest* fleet.

Without disturbing the ashes of the dead, without distressing the modesty of the living, by comparisons, may I not be allowed to state my firm Expectation, that the Commanders of the Fleets which now watch the Motions of the Enemy at *Toulon*, at *Breſt*, and in every other part of the World where they are to be found, will, on no distant day, afford their Country equal causes for similar Triumph and Exultation? There is not an

Admiral, an Officer, a Sailor, in the British Navy, who does not burn with Impatience to have an Opportunity of attacking the Enemy ;—who is not ready to exclaim with *Macduff*,

> Within my sword's length set him, if he 'scape
> Then Heav'n forgive him too.

The Navy will think itself unfortunate, if not dishonoured, should the Safety of the Country be left to the protection of the Army alone. The Army, though it unites with the whole Nation in a just estimate of the Skill and Courage of the Navy, is eager to gather unfading laurels, from finishing what the Navy may, by some unlucky chance, be obliged to leave undone.

The preparations of France may, for ought I know, my Lords, be greater now than they were in 1759 ; but I am certain of this, that there never was a ti ne, in the history of Great Britain, when our preparations were so extensive, when the Nation was so united within itself, its spirit so high, its sense of danger so strong, its indignation so roused, its detestation of French principles, French cruelties,

French rapacity, French ambition, so general and sincere as at this moment.

We have not, it must be confessed, and I am proud to confess it, a few thousands of Hessians and Hanoverians to defend us—but we have a whole nation of loyal and brave Subjects in Arms.—It is not in my power to animate the Country, nor do I speak so warmly of our preparations with any view to attempt it; as a plain man I plainly speak my mind. I know that the whole Country, from the Throne to the Cottage, is animated with the noblest Ardour; and I know too, that if there is a man in the Empire whom the Occasion does not animate, in vain will you attempt, by the most ardent words, to warm the frigid cowardice or disaffection of such a man's heart.

The occasion is extraordinary; and we meet it, as we ought to do, with extraordinary Resolution and Exertion. A successful Invasion, had it ever been accomplished during the Monarchy of France, would have been terminated by, perhaps, a disadvantageous Peace; but we ſhould have retained our Rank

in the scale of Nations. A successful Invasion by the Republic of France (Heaven avert so great an evil!) will never be terminated but in complete national Degradation, in public Bankruptcy, and individual Beggary. This limited Monarchy, the Glory of Civilized Society! will be overthrown—our aged Monarch (God protect him!) and his numerous Sons, will be buried, such is the acknowledged bravery of his race! in the last Ruins of their native land—Your Rank, my Lords, by which, for the benefit of all, you are now distinguished from the rest, will be heard of no more—The landed Gentry will be obliged to become Farmers, and be compelled, by unheard of, unthought of, Exactions, to give up the lamented produce of their own lands and of their own labour, to feed the Luxury of a foreign Country—The Farmers will be made Labourers, and the Labourers will be made Slaves—And, in addition to all these Calamities, the youth of every class will be made *Conscripts*—and dragged from their Country and their Fathers' House, to fight the battles of violent and unjust Ambition in every part

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of the world.—Sooner than all this should happen, I would say (did Christianity permit such a wish) may the Fate of the *Saguntines* become the fate of *Britons !*—

Such, my Lords, would be the final event of a successful Invasion of this Country by the Republic of France. I have in some degree described it, but I do not in any degree expect it; I expect the direct contrary. My Hope and my firm Expectation is, that, instead of Success, the Enemy will experience Defeat; instead of Triumph, Disgrace and Ruin—that, under the good providence of God, the Arms of Great Britain will not only preserve our own Independence, but be instrumental in exciting the Spirit of other Nations to recover theirs, and eventually contribute to the establishing the true Liberty, and promoting the true Prosperity, of France itself—but on this subject I forbear.—

And now, illustrious Peers of this mighty Empire! Venerable Fathers of our most venerable Church! I beseech you, individually, to pardon me, if in the Warmth of my zeal for the Public Safety (never more endangered

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than at present!) any Expression has escaped me unworthy the Dignity of your Rank to hear, unbecoming the Decorum of my Station to utter. Little more can be expected by the Country from a man of my age, except from his Prayers; and mine ſhall never be wanting for its Preservation, and for Peace among Mankind.

FINIS.

Luke Hanſard, Printer, Great Turnſtile, Lincoln's-Inn Fields.